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¶11. (U) Welcome to The Hague. Your visit to The Hague can strengthen ties with a proven ally on many issues, especially on nonproliferation and counterterrorism. As co-chair of the 5th Plenary Meeting of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), your focus will be on multi-lateral engagements. The following points on Dutch political events and specific foreign policy issues are background for your bilateral meetings with Dutch leaders.

Overview

¶12. (SBU) As a matter of policy and preference, the Netherlands primarily pursues its foreign policy interest within the framework of multilateral organizations, where the Dutch seek and often hold prominent roles far out of proportion to the small size of their nation. The Dutch see no contradiction between being good Europeans and good transatlanticists. They support both NATO and the EU and have engaged energetically to ensure that these two organizations pursue complementary rather than competitive objectives. In general, the Dutch share our view that the future of the transatlantic relationship will be determined less by what the U.S. does in Europe than by what the U.S. and Europe do together globally. They take their global responsibilities seriously and they usually are determined to include the United States in their global planning. They nurture democracy and human rights as a matter of policy.

¶13. (SBU) Dutch political parties represent the political spectrum from far left to far right. The coalition government is made up of the Christian Democratic Alliance (CDA) with 41 seats in the lower chamber of parliament, the Labor Party (PvdA) with 33 seats, and the Christian Union Party with 6 seats (out of a 150 seat Second Chamber/Tweede Kamer). The government has survived some heated debates over the last year, including a difficult decision on the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) program last month. Political posturing has already begun for the 2011 parliamentary elections. The tensions within the coalition are heightened by the sharp rise in popularity and gains in the recent EU elections of the extreme right Freedom Party (PVV) headed by Geert Wilders, who plays to the emotions of the population on such divisive issues as immigration, religion, and individual

rights.

Counterterrorism & Non-Proliferation

¶ 14. (U) The Dutch strongly subscribe to multilateral efforts to curb the spread of weapons and materials of mass destruction. They have supported U.S. efforts to uphold the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), especially in the instance of Iran. They are charter member of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), actively participate in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), and are members of the G-8 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. In addition to their effort in the political arena, they have committed financial resources to fund chemical weapon destruction facilities in the former Soviet Union. Dutch actively engage in virtually every non-proliferation fora and have consistently put the prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons at the top of their priorities for a common foreign policy within the EU. They are leaders in the GICNT as shown by hosting the 5th Plenary Meeting in The Hague.

¶ 15. (U) The Dutch are clearly taking the terrorist threat very seriously, expending significant financial and human resources since 9/11 to fight this problem. The Netherlands is a close ally in the fight against global terrorism. The Netherlands has ratified all the UN anti-terrorism conventions and, as a major financial center, takes strict measures to prevent terrorist financing very seriously. The Netherlands is an active member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and other groups fighting these financing networks. The Dutch have held trials for two groups suspected of plotting major terrorist attacks in the Netherlands. While not all the defendants were convicted, many were. In addition, at the request of the USG, the Dutch extradited one of their own nationals (a Dutch-Iraqi dual citizen) to the U.S. to stand trial for attempting to commit terrorist acts against American targets in Iraq. That deportee recently plead guilty in U.S. court.

¶ 16. (U) The Netherlands has the second highest number of Muslims as a share of the population (roughly 5 percent) in Western Europe. This fact means the Dutch take seriously the potential threat of Islamic radicalization producing home-grown terrorists. The grizzly murder of Dutch film maker Theo van Gogh in 2004, by a radicalized native-born Dutchman of Moroccan extraction, drove home this point.

Russia

¶ 17. (U) The Dutch support strong Russian-European relations, but are troubled by anti-democratic trends within Russia and skeptical of Russian intentions in the territories of the former Soviet Union, especially Georgia. Within the EU, the Dutch lie between those states pushing for closer relations with Russia (i.e. France and Germany) and those new members whose Soviet-era experience makes them instinctively suspicious of Moscow. From this middle-ground, the Dutch are well-positioned to advocate a positive but realistic Russian-European agenda. Former Russian President Putin visited the Netherlands in November 2005, and Prime Minister Balkenende reciprocated by visiting Moscow in November 2007. Although Balkenende was later criticized in Parliament for signing a major pipeline deal with GAZPROM during the visit, he also used the occasion to speak out publicly in support of human rights and to meet with Russian NGOs promoting the rule of law. Dutch officials also argue that Dutch participation in the GAZPROM deal will bring greater transparency to the process of bringing Russian natural gas to European markets. President Medvedev is scheduled to visit the Netherlands in late June.

Iran

¶18. (U) The Dutch share U.S. concerns about the Iranian nuclear program and the U.S. view that Iran must comply with its obligation under the NPT. The Dutch have supported the efforts on the &EU-38 (UK, France and Germany) in negotiating with the Iranians to cease reprocessing of nuclear materials and open their facilities to IAEA inspection. The Dutch Parliament, concerned about the human rights situation in Iran, continues to push the government to take a tougher approach to Iran than that favored by many EU members.

CONCLUSION

¶19. (SBU) To sum up, the Dutch leadership are strongly committed to nonproliferation and take an active role in promoting an agenda that parallels ours. Your bi-lateral engagements with the Dutch will be very welcome and they will look to you for insights into the new Administration's thinking on the future of the myriad of issues confronting nonproliferation and counterterrorism challenges.

GALLAGHER